The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields; and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1607 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1942 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 32, NO. 4

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Best labor news in many a long moon is the announcement that President Roosevelt will sit down around the table in the White House with a "labor war cabinet" to work out ways and means of bringing about fullest possible labor participation in America's war drive.

This is something the American Federation of Labor has been asking for ever since America launched its national defense program. It was important then. It is vital now because we are in the war ourselves.

Most disappointing labor news of the week is the outright CIO refusal to get together with the AFL and work out permanent peace and unity in the American labor movement.

The CIO, of course, was on a spot. It had John L. Lewis to contend with. Lewis had dumped a peace proposal in its lap. Phil Murray had reason to believe this proposal was a "phony." He had not been consulted about it in advance. He feared that it might be the first step by Lewis to seize control of a unified labor movement.

So Murray, in his desperation, not only got the CIO Executive Board to kick the Lewis plan out the window, but also closed the door to any peace negotiations with the AFL.

Peace vs. Truce

Organizational unity, Murray said, is not the pressing need of the moment. We disagree with him there. It is the fundamental labor need of this moment and of every moment to wipe out rivalry, dualism and division in the ranks of labor; to see to it that workers will regard their fellow workers as brothers, not enemies; and to unify labor's might and power behind the single goal of democratic progress.

Instead of organizational unity, Mr. Murray envisions functional unity between the CIO and AFL. He says this can be accomplished quicker and would work out better than actual peace and amalgamation.

In other words, Murray is proposing a labor truce for the duration of the war. And as a vehicle toward this end, he suggests the new "war labor cabinet" created by the President.

Now we can see why Murray is making this proposition. It's good salesmanship. He had to have some talking point to convince the CIO Executive Board to bar the way to organizational unity. So he grabbed at the straw of the President's proposal for a "war labor cabinet." A drowning man will grab at straws. And make no mistake about it—Murray was in sore straits when he faced his Executive Board and knew that unless it not only to break with Lewis but to reject repeated AFL peace proposals.

The CIO followed the Murray line. It abolished its standing peace committee, of which Lewis was chairman, and announced that CIO members in the "war labor cabinet" would act in its stead.

Not an Alternative

The trouble is that the President's proposal was not an alternative to the Lewis peace plan or to the repeated AFL invitations to the CIO to settle all differences.

Read the President's letter to President William Green and see whether there is the slightest hint—let alone direct mention—of labor peace as a truce contained therein. Even Sherlock Holmes couldn't find any such thing.

Another vital factor is that the AFL members of the "war labor cabinet" are not authorized or empowered to talk peace with the CIO. That is the sole function of the AFL Peace Committee, which has been authorized by continuous AFL conventions to do this job. And no one can or will take away that authority from the committee.

Finally, it is absurd to think that this "war labor cabinet" would have the temerity to take up with the President of the United States, the busiest man in the world today, quarrels or disputes between AFL and CIO unions.

However, it is clear that in order to get anywhere the AFL and CIO members of the "war labor cabinet" will have to get together among themselves on a single program and set of policies governing labor's participation in the war.

In the process of developing unity of policy and purpose, better feeling between the two groups unquestionably will grow. Out of the understandings thus reached, it is quite possible that a truce on organizational hostilities for the duration of the war—tacit, at least—may come about. We hope so. It would be a good thing for the country and a good thing for labor. But it is not the same thing as labor peace. It is not nearly as desirable as labor unity.

We thought we ought to make that clear.

Pres. Roosevelt Creates First "War Labor Cabinet;" Green, Meany, Tobin, To Shape Policy With Him; CIO Rejects Labor Peace, Snubs Lewis, May Seek Truce

The President's Proposal

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 22, 1942.

Dear Bill:

In order that Labor's part in the national effort may be most effective, I am asking the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to form a Combined Labor War Board, to consult with me periodically on all matters concerning Labor's participation in the war. It is my thought that this Board would meet with me, and therefore it should be sufficiently small to make this a real "round table" talk.

Would you be good enough to let me know as soon as possible?

Always sincerely,

(Signed) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Honorable William Green,
President, American Federation of Labor,
Washington, D. C.

The AFL Accepts

January 23, 1942.

To the President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to respond to your request that I appoint a Committee representing the American Federation of Labor to serve with a Committee appointed by President Murray of the Congress of Industrial Organizations to serve as a Combined Labor War Board, as set forth in your letter dated January 22nd.

Inasmuch as you request the appointment of a small Committee, I submit the following names of three representatives of the American Federation of Labor to serve on said Committee:

William Green, President,
George Meany, Secretary-Treasurer,
Daniel J. Tobin, Sixth Vice-President,
American Federation of Labor.

The members of this Committee will be prepared to meet with you at your call and at your convenience.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) WILLIAM GREEN,
President,
American Federation of Labor.

WILL LEWIS QUIT CIO? HE REFUSES TO TALK

Washington, D. C.—Will John L. Lewis attempt to lead the United Mine Workers Union out of the CIO?

That is the question stirring labor circles ever since the CIO trampled all over the Lewis labor peace proposal. CIO ranks also were agitated by these additional questions:

Will Lewis stop paying per capita tax to the U. M. W. to the CIO, amounting to $360,000 a year? Will he demand immediate repayment of U. M. W. loans amounting, perhaps, to several millions? Will he continue to pay Philip Murray $18,000 a year as a U. M. W. Vice President?

Lewis remained strictly silent and deaf to all such newspaper queries.

CIO ABOLISHES ITS PEACE BOARD

Green Deplores Failure To Meet For Unity

Washington, D. C.—The CIO Executive Board, meeting in New York City, formally rejected immediate resumption of negotiations with the AFL to bring about American labor unity.

As though to emphasize the finality of its decision, the CIO group abolished its peace committee.

Torn by internal dissension and in the grip of a struggle for power between President Philip Murray and John L. Lewis, the CIO not only turned thumbs down on the Lewis proposal to reopen peace negotiations but closed the door to the repeated offers by the AFL to heal the breach.

Commenting on the CIO action, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor said:

"We deeply regret that the internal situation in the CIO has caused its leaders to decline to resume negotiations with the American Federation of Labor for reuniting the labor movement, as repeatedly proposed by the American Federation of Labor.

"The American Federation of Labor, ever since the split occurred, has always stood ready to meet with those who left us and to settle differences. Our Peace Committee stands ready to do so at any and all times in the future.

To cover up its embarrassment, the CIO Executive Board tried to make it appear that it was accepting President Roosevelt's proposal for a Combined Labor War Board as an alternative to the Lewis peace proposal. Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Tom Joyce and John Lundeen, representatives, Switchmen's Union of North America.

The labor delegates voted unanimously to make every effort to bring about the prompt organization of civilian defense committees in the various units of the labor movement in all parts of the nation. These committees are to provide information and to stimulate widespread participation by wage-earners in all civilian defense activities.

NOTICE TO EDITORS OF LABOR PAPERS

With this issue of the American Federation of Labor News Service there is being mailed to you under separate cover a 4-page seat of the front cover of the January Federationist. This cover represents an artist's conception of the way American workers fought side by side with the Marines at Guam against the Japs. It illustrates much more graphically than words could express the heroic conduct of AFL workers on the firing line, something of which the entire nation is proud.

F. D. R. Asks AFL and CIO Leaders To Consult With Him On All Matters Affecting Labor in War

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt created the first "War Labor Cabinet" in America's history to give organized labor a full voice in shaping war labor policies and to assure utmost participation by both the AFL and CIO in the nation's war effort.

Under the new setup, three representatives of the American Federation of Labor and three from the CIO will sit down with the President "around the table" periodically at the White House to work out unified programs that will make labor's part in the national effort "most effective."

President Green promptly accepted the President's proposal. The CIO approval came a day later. Those named to the new consultative body, designated by the President the "Combined Labor War Board," follow:

For the American Federation of Labor—President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and Vice President Daniel J. Tobin.

For the Congress of Industrial Organizations—President Philip Murray, R. J. Thomas and Julius Emspack.

Contrary to newspaper reports, the Combined Labor War Board will have nothing to do with establishing peace between the AFL and CIO, nor will the President be called upon to sit in judgment on disputes between unions of the two organizations. No such thought was expressed by the President when he conferred with Mr. Green and Mr. Meany at the White House about his plan, nor was any such idea mentioned by the President in his letter to Mr. Green formally launching the proposal.

However, it is expected that the leaders of the two labor federations will be able to work out a unified labor policy and program in their consultations with the President, thus strengthening the influence of labor and assuring its full cooperation with the Government in the conduct of the war.

Mr. Green hailed the President's proposal as establishing for the first time in this country official consultation between labor and the head of the Government.

For more than two years, Mr. Green recalled, labor has been demanding this very thing and has pointed to the splendid results in Great Britain from the Churchill Government's policy of consulting in advance with labor on all matters concerning labor's participation in the war.

The new setup outlined by President Roosevelt should prove even superior to the successful British procedure, Mr. Green predicted.

Among the major problems which President Roosevelt is expected to take up immediately with his new group of labor advisers are:

1—Measures to relieve unemployment resulting from conversion of industrial plants to war-time production.

2—The widest possible extension of the twenty-four hour day and seven-day week in all vital war industries.

3—Broadening of labor supply, including allocation of available skilled workers to where they are most urgently needed and the training of millions of new workers for the victory production program.

4—Wage and hour policies, as well as general Government policies—such as price control, taxes, rationing, etc.—which directly affect American workers.

No date has yet been set for the first meeting of the new "labor cabinet", but its members are expected to be called into the White House within a week.

Because of the anticipation that the AFL and CIO will necessarily attempt to work out a unified policy to present to the President, it was immediately assumed that the new board will effect a truce between the two organizations for the duration of the war. If this is achieved, it will be an incidental by-product—not the major direction—of the board's operations.

Rejection by the CIO of immediate resumption of negotiations to unify the AFL and CIO makes actual peace between the two organizations impossible for the time being.

Mr. Green emphasized that the peace committee of the AFL stands ready to meet with the CIO for the purpose of bringing about organizational unity whenever such an opportunity is afforded.

"Labor Answers President's Call," Meany And Woll Assure America

New York City—American labor is responding in full measure to President Roosevelt's call for heroic service, Secretary - Treasurer George Meany and Vice President Matthew Woll of the American Federation of Labor assured the nation in a coast-to-coast radio broadcast.

"There are no qualifications or exceptions attached to our pledge to our Commander-in-Chief that we shall stand loyally and steadfastly by him in this most critical period in the history of our nation and the world," said Mr. Meany.

"Labor never was more united and more wholeheartedly in support of the President and this Government than at this hour," Mr. Woll echoed.

Mr. Meany declared AFL unions already have swung into constructive action to put America's victory program over the top. He cited these examples:

"On the West Coast, an agreement has been put into effect whereby all major shipyards will operate around the clock basis, twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week. This is what the President asked for and this is what the unions of the American Federation of Labor are ready to do in every vital war industry.

"Also, in every American city the members of our unions have offered their services individually and collectively to help civilian defense and to protect our people against enemy attacks.

"Finally, the American Federation of Labor has launched a nation-wide drive for the purchase of one billion dollars worth of War Bonds and five million members of our organization during the coming year. We ask all our loyal workers to invest their savings in America and let their idle money be put to work to help our country win the war."

Mr. Woll paid tribute to the heroism of American workers at Guam and Wake Islands who fought side by side with American marines and soldiers and beat off attack after attack until they were finally overpowered by superior numbers and equipment.

He emphasized, also, that American workers are giving their sons and brothers and loved ones for service in the nation's armed forces.

"But the real place at which American labor will be called upon in these days to serve," Mr. Woll continued, "will be in the mines and factories and workshops of America.

"The Office of Civilian Defense recognizes that labor's role in the war is of vital importance to the speediest production, adequate protection and effective volunteer participation. Labor's responsibilities require that labor shall be adequately represented in the determination of policy in the field of administration of civilian defense."

The conference was divided into a morning session, which was held at the Labor Department, and an afternoon session at the White House. The delegates were the guests of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at luncheon in the state dining room at the White House. Mrs. Roosevelt is assistant director of O.C.D., in charge of volunteer participation.

President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, speaking briefly at the luncheon, pledged that organized labor, as represented by the A. F. of L., will give its full civilian defense the same wholehearted, patriotic cooperation which the Federation is giving to all phases of the nation's war program.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, who addressed the morning session. Other speakers were O.C.D. Director F. H. LaGuardia, Robert J. Watt, international representative of the A. F. of L., and leaders of the C.I.O. and the railroad unions.

The conference authorized continuation of a three-man labor committee to work with the O.C.D. in Washington on all questions relating to labor's part in civilian defense. The members of this committee are Mr. Watt, John Brophy of the C.I.O., and D. B. Robertson, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen.

A national labor advisory committee was also established. On this national body Mr. Meany, Mr. Watt, J. McCreburn, secretary-treasurer of the Union Label Trades Department, and 11 other leaders of A. F. of L. organizations will serve in company with C.I.O. and railroad brotherhood representatives.

Besides Messrs. Meany, Watt and Ornburn, the A. F. of L. members of the national committee are:

E. J. Brown, president, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; George J. Richardson, secretary-treasurer, International Association of Firefighters; Martin Durkin, secretary-treasurer, United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters; E. E. Milliman, president, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes; Thomas J. Lyons, president, New York State Federation of Labor; Leo E. George, president, National Federation of Postoffice Clerks.

Also George S. Counts, president, American Federation of Teachers; William C. Doherty, president, National Association of Letter Carriers; Harrison Heffner, secretary-treasurer, American Federation of Government Employes; R. F. McLaurin, organizer, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Tom Joyce and John Lundeen, representatives, Switchmen's Union of North America.

The labor delegates voted unanimously to make every effort to bring about the prompt organization of civilian defense committees in the various units of the labor movement in all parts of the nation. These committees are to provide information and to stimulate widespread participation by wage-earners in all civilian defense activities.

Landis Assures Labor Major Role In Civilian Defense Activities

Washington, D. C.—American labor will play a leading role in all civilian defense activities, the Office of Civilian Defense assured labor in a statement of policy issued following an all-day conference participated in by the national heads of O.C.D. and more than 30 leaders of the American Federation of Labor, C.I.O. and the railroad brotherhoods.

Organized labor will be represented on municipal and state defense councils throughout the nation as well as at the Washington headquarters of the O.C.D., "through persons recommended by labor itself."

James M. Landis, executive officer of the Office of Civilian Defense, explained that in a number of localities persons not accepted by labor have been appointed as "labor representatives." Such appointees are presumably to be supplanted by accredited labor spokesmen.

"The Office of Civilian Defense has called upon labor to contribute to the full extent of its ability in the organization and manning of the protective services and to join with other citizens in services directed to meet community problems," the policy statement said. "Labor has pledged its full support."

"The Office of Civilian Defense recognizes that labor's role in the war is of vital importance to the speediest production, adequate protection and effective volunteer participation. Labor's responsibilities require that labor shall be adequately represented in the determination of policy in the field of administration of civilian defense."

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Mrs. Roosevelt Protests Attempts To Smear Labor With Propaganda

Washington, D. C.—Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt agrees with organized labor that much harm has been done through the daily press has played up the number of days lost due to strikes while ignoring the vastly greater amount of time lost through accidents, illness and unemployment.

Addressing the recent conference on labor's role in civilian defense, Mrs. Roosevelt said:

"We have played up all over the country the fact that we have lost so many man-hours on strikes and those are the only figures. I have some figures that I want to read to you because I think they are important for people to know.

"Accidents accounted for 10 times more man-days lost than strikes. Illness accounted for 20 times more man-days lost than strikes. Unemployment accounted for 75 times more man-days lost than strikes.

"Those facts need to get out in this country and change public opinion. There is a great thing that needs to be done and that is in publicity—in real publicity that tells the truth."

Birthday Cake With Trimmings Presented To Roosevelt By Green

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt received a birthday cake—with trimmings—in honor of his 60th—Diamond Jubilee—birthday. The cake was a gift from the Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union. The trimmings attached to the cake—in the form of checks totalling more than $10,000—represented contributions by the A. F. of L. unions for the anti-paralysis fund.

The cake was presented to the President at the White House by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor.

The cake will be placed on the stage at Ulbse's Arena where Washington's largest birthday celebration will be held. It will be cut by Mrs. Roosevelt Friday night when she visits the arena with guest stars of stage and screen.

This is the third successive year in which the baker's union has presented the President with a birthday cake. This one weighs three hundred and fifty pounds and is six feet, four inches high.

Accompanying Mr. Green to the White House for the presentation were Andrew W. Myrup, son of President Andrew A. Myrup, of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union, and his three-year-old daughter, Jill. Mr. Myrup represented his union's officers. The cake was designed and baked by Clement Maggia, Washington pastry expert.

In presenting the cake Mr. Green said:

"This cake symbolizes our great faith in and devotion to your cause, President. It manifests, further, our unity behind your noble efforts to preserve the American way of living.

"Let the cake and that for which it stands serve notice on the world's dictators that we, living under a democracy, can be and are readily unified under the impact of blows which threaten our democratic government."

STAGEHANDS UNION GAINS 2-YEAR FILM-STUDIO PACT

New York, N. Y.—A two-year agreement between the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employes and the eight major motion picture producing studios settled all labor problems, including hours, increased wages, and working conditions. The contract will cover 16 union locals and affects 10,000 workers, including making artists, studio projectionists, wardrobe workers, prop men, sound technicians, limp operators, cameramen and laborers.